

# “Marielle, presente”: Metaleptic temporality and the enregisterment of hope in Rio de Janeiro

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## Abstract

This article looks to the assassination of Marielle Franco, a queer Black councilwoman from the Complexo da Maré favela in Rio de Janeiro, to outline a principled metacommunicative action toward “hope.” Empirically, it unpacks features of the pragmatics of her discourse, along with that of mourners who knew her. We identify two main features in their discourse that point to the enregisterment of hope, i.e. to ways in which their communicative practices have been attuned to avoid despair by propelling an alternative indexing of time, authority, and forms of life. These features are as follows: metaleptic temporality, i.e. the reinsertion of Marielle’s agentive time into the temporal universe of heroes; and *papo reto*, a translational and performative practice of scaling bureaucratic and economic talk into local registers. Finally, we point to the habituated and pedagogic dimension of this sociolinguistics of hope, in part responsible for the fractalization and performativity of the mourning movement.

## KEYWORDS

hope, language ideology, Marielle Franco, metaleptic temporality, *papo reto*

## Resumo

Este artigo estuda o assassinato de Marielle Franco, uma vereadora negra e lésbica do Complexo da Maré no Rio de Janeiro, de forma a delinear os princípios de uma ação metacomunicativa direcionada à “esperança”. Empiricamente, analisam-se características do discurso de Marielle e do movimento de luto que se formou depois de sua morte

trágica. Identificamos duas características básicas no discurso desses agentes que apontam para o enregistramento da esperança, i.e. para modos em que suas práticas comunicativas têm sido moldadas de forma a evitar o desespero por meio da projeção de índices alternativos de tempo, autoridade e formas de vida. Essas características são: temporalidade metaléptica, i.e. a reinserção do tempo agentivo de Marielle no universo temporal dos heróis; e papo reto, uma prática tradutória e performativa que “escala” a fala burocrática e econômica em registros locais. Finalmente, apontamos para a dimensão habituada e pedagógica dessa sociolinguística da esperança, em parte responsável pela fractalização e performatividade do movimento de luto.

#### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Esperança, ideologia linguística, Marielle Franco, papo reto, temporalidade metaléptica

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

This article looks to the assassination of Marielle Franco, a queer Black councilwoman from one of Rio de Janeiro's favelas, to delineate how she and later her mourning movement enregistered hope through their discourse. Hope is here understood both as an affect (Bloch, 1986) and as a linguistic ideology (Woolard, 1998) – i.e. a form of practical reason connecting forms of talk and social processes that is operative in spaces where people face conditions shaped by violence, uncertainty, or political destructiveness. Sociolinguistically, speakers who engage with hope use language in ways that oppose despair by reimagining authority, temporality, cooperation, and the access to sociolinguistic resources. We build our argument by parsing the enregisterment (Agha, 2007) of hope in the communicative practice of both Marielle and her movement. We specifically look at their principled engagement with two core features of hope: temporality, or “time as it is lived within a form of life” (Lear, 2006, p. 40), and sociolinguistic resources, exemplified by Marielle and her movement's grappling with *papo reto*, or straightforward talk, a non-elite register deployed to confront bureaucratic gatekeeping.

Marielle was a queer Black woman from the Complexo da Maré, a group of favelas where some 130,000 people live. Across the state, inequality and social precariousness have become exacerbated in the favelas under Jair Bolsonaro's term as president (2019–present). Police violence, which has disproportionately impacted young Black males living in favelas, has escalated: in 2019, the Rio police killed 1,814 people, the highest rate of deaths since the numbers began being tracked in 1998 (Andreoni & Lodoño, 2020). As a point of comparison, the police lethality in Rio, whose population is 16.42 million people, outnumbers that of the entire U.S.A., where police killed 1,004 people in 2019 (Washington Post, 2020). Yet while the Complexo da Maré is subjected to some of the lowest social indexes in the city, it is also a location of intense cultural production and everyday creativity. Since the mass protests that took to the streets of Brazilian cities in 2013 demanding political change, some analysts (e.g. Nobre, 2020; Machado da Silva & Menezes, 2019) framed Marielle as an icon of

progressive political novelty. As a Black woman, she embodied the marks of a dispossessed population. Furthermore, as a sociologist who designed policy for almost a decade as an aide to progressive deputy Marcelo Freixo, Marielle knew that precarity in favela life was a “well-worn feature of capitalism,” whereby large segments of people are rendered as “excess workers” (Kasmir, 2018).

Born in 1979, Marielle entered politics by joining Freixo's cabinet, and for a decade was the connection between him and the favelas. In addition to devising human rights policy, they confronted *milícias* – military groups who unofficially control some favelas. In 2016, Marielle decided to run for city council. She competed with few financial resources in a grassroots campaign. She received 46,502 votes, the fifth highest vote tally for any councilmember and became the only Afro-Brazilian out of seven women elected for the 51 council positions. A year after the beginning of a successful term in office, Marielle and her driver Anderson Gomes were assassinated in an ambush on the evening of March 14, 2018. After Marielle left a debate at Casa das Pretas, together with Anderson and an assistant, Fernanda Chaves, she was hit with at least four shots to the head. Anderson was also shot in the back while Fernanda was the lone survivor. The assailant, former military sniper, Ronnie Lessa, used a highly accurate HK MP5 submachine gun, commonly used by Rio's elite police forces and not easily acquired by ordinary criminals (O Globo, 2018). Soon after she died, a movement of mourning and solidarity grew fast, reaching many locations in Brazil and around the world. Thousands of people gathered in Rio de Janeiro and most major Brazilian cities to mourn her death and demand justice. Aided by technologies of digital communication, the mantras “Marielle, presente! (Marielle, present!)” and “Marielle é semente! (Marielle is a seed!)” travelled from the street protests to different parts of the world.

As of September 2020, there is still considerable uncertainty surrounding Marielle's death. It is not yet known who commissioned the murder, much less their motives. Even under the pressure from international human rights bodies and the family's activism, the investigation has had several flaws, attempted obstructions, and false testimonies. In spite of the slow progress by Rio's investigative police due to underfunding, the family opposes the federalization of the case. The main reasons for their struggle to keep the investigation at the state level relate to the facts that Bolsonaro has repeatedly dismissed the assassination of Marielle as an “average” crime, that Bolsonaro's family has kept “a close relation to the *milícia* suspected of killing Marielle” (Filho, 2019), and especially that he has attempted to pack the federal police with his sympathizers (Phillips, 2020a). Besides, the shooter Lessa was coincidentally a neighbor of Bolsonaro and had appeared in pictures next to the president (Greenwald & Pougy, 2019). Bolsonaro's family has over the years cultivated political and financial ties with Adriano da Nobrega, the head of a militia that, according to Rio's prosecutors, is possibly connected to the case. Yet, Nobrega himself was suspiciously assassinated by the Bahia police in February 2020 while in hiding (Phillips, 2020b).

Both authors had been engaged in an ongoing collaboration dating to 2014 on the sociolinguistics of hope, guided by an agenda of understanding how subjects in different global contexts (Brazil, Hong Kong, Korea, and the U.S.A.) navigate or survive uncertainty, precarity, or violence predicated on the unequal economic and political arrangements of globalization by reimagining sociolinguistic resources. The event of Marielle's assassination had an unexpected impact on Daniel Silva's fieldwork in Complexo do Alemão, a group of favelas contiguous to Marielle's neighborhood, if anything because his interlocutors were themselves part of the mourning movement that was surfacing. Their uncanny engagement with temporality along with their principled ways of narrating sociolinguistic inequalities compelled us to refocus our inquiry in order to better understand the temporal renarrations and sociolinguistic practices that were unfolding before our eyes. We witnessed, both locally and around the world, a mourning movement that refused to give in to despair by engaging with hope as a form of practical reason (Lear, 2006). In response, we embarked on a collaborative inquiry in order

to address this recalibration of language and temporal resources toward hope, which methodologically has drawn on a series of interviews that were carried out by Daniel Silva with women who were, in different ways, influenced by Marielle; on online archives of Marielle's, her family's and her colleagues' speeches; and on analyses of news articles.<sup>1</sup> Our analysis leads us to an understanding of hope as a situated practice that reorients time and language. More specifically, our analysis of these language practices in Rio directs us toward what we call a sociolinguistics of hope, which offers insight into how temporality is reoriented, registers are recalibrated, and habituated practices are fractalized into broader domains.

In what follows, we begin by explaining how Marielle and her mourning movement's enregisterment of hope transgresses chronological time by projecting a metaleptic temporality. We then move to three case studies that unpack the practical temporal and metacommunicative work on hope by Marielle and the mourners. The first case focuses on a plenary address by Marielle in the city hall and parses her recasting of time and rationalization of sociolinguistic inequality at the repeated instances of male interruptions to her talk. The next draws on how the mourning movement itself engaged with temporality based on Marielle's rescaling of time and sociolinguistic inequities. The third case discusses Marielle and her mourning movement's engagement with *papo reto*, or straightforward talk, a fundamental metapragmatic notion for the enregisterment of hope in Rio de Janeiro. In the conclusion, we gesture toward the possibility of a sociolinguistics of hope – a habituated, practical, and pedagogic register formation at work in Brazil, which affords a greater understanding of the role of sociolinguistic resources in surviving contemporary conditions of precarization, violence, and inequality.

## 2 | METALEPTIC TEMPORALITY AND THE ENREGISTERMENT OF HOPE

Hope has come to be a topic of interest among scholars in the social sciences (Antelius, 2007; Crapanzano, 2003; Lear, 2006; Miyazaki, 2004) and in sociolinguistics more specifically (Heller & McElhiny, 2017; Borba, 2019). Heller and McElhiny (2017), for instance, argue that constructions of language have worked in tandem with the production of inequality in capitalism. As hope “lies in the reorientation of knowledge” (Miyazaki, 2004, p. 149), Heller and McElhiny's (2017, pp. 254–255) key insight is defining hope as “the strategies undertaken on the terrain of language to repair past harm and, on that basis, to move forward to more equitable and more peaceful futures,” and therefore as a productive reorientation of metalinguistic knowledge in the accumulating field of capitalism. Importantly, cultivating hope is not universally and uniformly instantiated around the world, as implied by Blöser's (2019) pursuit of hope as a family resemblance concept (Wittgenstein, 1953). That is, hope is “multiply realizable on the ontological level” (Blöser, 2019, p. 205), displaying a series of crisscrossing, overlapping, and non-uniform similarities across its multiple instantiations in different societies.

Therefore, while grounding our observation on the situated field of hope production by Marielle and her mourners in Rio, we will also be attuned to family resemblances between the pragmatic features of hope in their discourse and those reported in the literature. To this end, Marxist philosopher Bloch (1986) offers a pioneering account. Bloch (1986) defines hope as both an affect and a principle of explanation. As an affect, “hope goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them” (p. 3). Temporally, hope orients people to the “Not-Yet-Being,” toward expansion and potentiality. It is in this directionality that hope also becomes a principle of philosophical explanation. Bloch objects the Platonic principle of anamnesis – “the doctrine that all knowledge is simply re-remembering” (p. 8) – as well as the psychoanalytic theories of his time that conceived human drives as impelled

to repeat traces from a primal past. Instead, Bloch's theorizing is aimed at freeing the unconscious "upwards" and "forward," to that which may be brought to awareness through a practical cultivation of the senses (Mahmood, 2005). Bloch uses the example of the daydream as a privileged site for the cultivation of hope, precisely because of its practical imaginative possibilities. Bloch is thus invested in pulling ethical action out of "contemplation, which for centuries has only been related to What Has Become," and instead locating it in a "participating, co-operative process-attitude" (Bloch, 1986, p. 146).

As we discuss later, while Marielle and her movement engaged with hope in a practical, "participating" and "cooperative" manner, their grappling with temporality differs from Bloch's modernist vision of time. In other words, whereas Bloch insisted that hopeful action is oriented toward a teleological future, Marielle herself, and later her mourning movement, projected time in ways that do not conform to a future seen as chronological progress. Marielle's enregistering of hope was also distinct from Bloch's dismissal of the weight of the past in that she simultaneously knew the effects of slavery in Brazil and looked back at the history of survival and creativity of the Black women who opened the space for her. Moreover, her mourners have located hope not in a linear future to be aspired for but in the "present" (see Antelius, 2007). That is, since Marielle's tragic death, their chanting of the mantras "Marielle, presente" and "Marielle vive (Marielle lives)," along with their fight for justice, ground Marielle's enregisterment of hope in the present of political action. We call this projection of time "metaleptic temporality," which we unpack below.

Metaleptic temporality lays bare the fact that, in its multiple realizations, hope does not necessarily refer to time as chronological, which limits our orientation to the "future" in a predetermined manner. In narrative theory, metalepsis has been defined as the "transition from one narrative level to another" (Genette, 1980, p. 234) or "a deliberate transgression between the world of the telling and the world of the told" (Pier, 2016, p. 1). Metalepsis may be exemplified by a character in a novel who leaves the world of the "told" and enters the world of the "telling" by joining the reader through metanarration, as in the case of Charlotte Brontë's Shirley who tells the reader that "You and I will join the party" (Ryan, 2001, p. 89) or vice versa, as in the narrator in Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* who "leaves" a character named Fanny (Fludernik, 2003, p. 385). An example of metalepsis in film is Tom Baxter, a character in Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo* who exits the screen and meets Cecilia, a spectator who had repeatedly been to the cinema to watch the movie (see Civitarese, 2010). Genette (1980) writes that this transgression of narrative levels or temporal universes "produces an effect of strangeness that is either comical or fantastic" (p. 235).

However, while the extant protests that reinsert Marielle into the time of the living produce a residual effect of a "fantastic" performance, their principled engagement with temporality goes beyond performing the uncanny. In narrative theory itself, as Fludernik (2003) contends, "metalepsis in many instances need not actually be literally treated as an ontological contradiction (and therefore transgression), but could be regarded as an imaginative transfer into the impossible in parallel with authorial (...) memory of dialogues and thoughts in the past" (p. 393). The mourners' metaleptic narration of Marielle as being present among them thus refers to a transgression of a taken-for-granted order of time and to a broader "belated" constitution of themselves as subjects (Butler, 1997). Butler (1997) engages metalepsis beyond its transgression of narrative layers, as a belated temporality embedded in citational practices. For instance, while the subject who utters "I am" is citing a formula that precedes their existence as an individual, the uttering of "I am" – a form of citation – metaleptically produces the subject as the originator of the formula, i.e. the subject is "temporarily produced as the belated and fictive origin of the performative" (Butler, 1997, p. 49). The example of metalepsis as embedded in citationality is thus representative not only of the metaleptic orientation to temporality that we adopt but more specifically to the fact that enregistering hope is contingent on the transgression of chronological time.

In the following sections, we proceed to an empirical analysis of how Marielle and her movement realized these features of temporality and enregisterment.

### 3 | “NÃO SEREI INTERROMPIDA”

We begin our discussion by looking at how Marielle herself recast time in her biography. Excerpt (1) is from her last speech in the city hall, on Women's Day in Brazil, March 8, 2018, 6 days before her murder. During her address, Marielle is repeatedly interrupted by men. Given her sympathy for linguistic ideologies that rationalize male interruptions to women in conflictive contexts as attempts at domination (West & Zimmerman, 1983), Marielle not only displays a metapragmatic awareness of the small insults under way but also positions the interruptions on the scale (Carr & Lempert, 2016) of gender inequality, economic redistribution, and the memory of the dictatorship in Brazil. Of note is how Marielle responds to her interruptions:

(1)<sup>2</sup>

Marielle:	inclusive nesse momento onde a democracia se coloca frágil, aonde se questiona se vai haver processo eleitoral ou não, aonde a gente vê todos os escândalos em relação ao parlamento (.) falar sobre as mulheres que lutam pela (.) outra forma de fazer política no processo democrático é fundamental (.) inclusive em tempos onde a justificativa da crise– ((um vereador coloca uma rosa no púlpito, e Marielle o cumprimenta enquanto é interrompida)) [tudo bom vereador?	including at this time when democracy stands fragile, when we wonder if there will be elections or not, when we see all the scandals affecting the parliament, (.) to speak about women who fight for (.) another way of doing politics in democracy is fundamental (.) including at times when the justification of the crisis– ((a councilman places a rose on the pulpit; Marielle greets him while being interrupted)) [how are you councilman?
Councilman:	[feliz dia das mulheres=	[happy women's day=
→Marielle:	= obrigada (.) aonde a justifica– a justificativa da crise, a precarização, a dificuldade da vida das mulheres é apresentada, mas com muita <u>dificuldade real</u> (.) tempo da escola (.) aonde estão as vagas da creche apresentadas pelo gover– pelo prefeito Marcelo <u>Crivella</u> que iria ser (.) ampliada, aumentada? aonde que tão as educadoras e os educadores (.) que não foram chamados nos concursos? (1.2) como ficam as crianças nesse período de intervenção? (1.4) enfim– ((Italo Ciba se aproxima do púlpito, trazendo uma rosa)) [ <u>não vem me interromper agora né?</u>	=thank you (.) when the justifica– the justification, the precariousness, the hardship of women's life is presented, but with much <u>real hardship</u> (.) the schooling time (.) where are the daycare units promised by the gover– mayor Marcelo <u>Crivella</u> that would be (.) amplified, enhanced? where are the male and female educators (.) who weren't hired? (1.2) how will children fare in this time of federal intervention? (1.4) anyways– ((Italo Ciba approaches the pulpit, bringing a flower)) [ <u>you're not interrupting now, right?</u>
→Italo:	[é rapidinho ((entrega uma rosa)) tô fazendo minha parte no seu dia=	[it won't take long ((he hands her a flower)) I'm doing my part in your day=
Marielle:	=mas homem fazendo homice (.) meu Deus do Céu (.) obrigada Italo=	=but it's a man behaving as a man (.) my dear God (.) thank you Italo=
→ Italo:	=Deus [te abençoe	=God [bless you



<p>Marielle:</p>	<p>[amém brigada (.) <u>brigada</u> vereadores (.) como eu falei antes e falava na Fiocruz no dia de hoje (.) as rosas da resistência nascem do asfalto (.) a gente recebe rosa mas a gente vai tá com o punho cerrado também, falando do nosso lugar de vida e resistência con::tra (0.8) os mandos e desmandos que afetam nossas vidas né? ((aplausos e urros)) até porque não é uma questão do momento atual e:: vereador na (.) última semana em que eu falava sobre o processo de violência sofrido pelas mulheres no carnaval me questionava da onde eu tirava os dados apresentados (.) as mulheres quando saem às ruas na manifestação <u>↑do oito de março</u> daqui a pouco na <u>Candelária</u> (.) fazem porque (.) entre 83 países, o Brasil é o <u>sétimo</u> mais violento (.) e aí volto a repetir (0.5) dados da Organização Muni- Mundial de Saúde (.) esse quadro segue piorando, aumentando 6,5 por cento no último ano, por di::a são 12 mulheres assassinadas no Brasil (.) o último dado que a gente tem do <u>Estado do Rio de Janeiro</u> figuram de [<u>treze</u> estupros por dia]</p>	<p>[Amen thank you (.) thanks councilmembers (.) as I said before and I said at Fiocruz today (.) the roses of resistance blossom in the asphalt (.) we receive roses but we will fight with tight fists too, by speaking from our place of life and resistance aga::inst (0.8) the order and counter-orders affecting our lives, right? ((applause and roars)) actually this is not a question from today and:: a councilmember (.) last week when I spoke about the violence suffered by women in carnival was questioning me about the data I presented (.) women when they go out in the streets for protesting <u>↑like March eighth later in Candelária</u> (.) they do so because (.) in 83 countries, Brazil is the <u>seventh</u> most violent (.) and I repeat (0.5) data from World's Health Organization (.) this picture is getting worse, growing 6.5 per cent last year, every da::y it's 12 women murdered in Brazil (.) the last data we have from <u>the state of Rio de Janeiro</u> point to [<u>thirteen</u> rapes a day]</p>
<p>→ Man in audience:</p>	<p>[Viva Ustra!=] ((uma referência a Carlos Brilhante Ustra, um torturador na ditadura))</p>	<p>[Go Ustra!=] ((a reference to Carlos Brilhante Ustra, a torturer in the dictatorship))</p>
<p>Marielle:</p>	<p>=essa é (.) a relação (.) com a violência contra as mulheres ((ela foca a atenção ao autor do elogio ao torturador)) a gente tem um senhor que está defendendo a ditadura e falando alguma coisa contrária, é isso? eu peço que a presidência, no caso de maiores manifestações que venham atrapalhar minha fala, assim proceda como a gente faz (.) quando a tribuna (.) interrompe qualquer vereador (.) <u>não serei interrompida, não aturo interrupção dos vereadores dessa casa e não aturarei a interrupção de um cidadão que vem aqui e não SABE ouvir a posição de uma mulher ELEITA, presidente da comissão da mulher dessa casa</u> ((aplausos))</p>	<p>=this is (.) the relation (.) to the violence against women ((she stares at the man who shouted the torturer's name)) is there a gentleman who is defending the dictatorship and contradicting me? I ask that the presidency, in this case of a manifestation that disturbs my speech, follow the ritual (.) when the tribune (.) interrupts any councilmember (.) <u>I won't be interrupted, I won't stand any interruption from any council members in this house and I won't stand the interruption of a citizen who comes here and does not KNOW how to listen to an ELECTED woman, and president of the women's commission in the house</u> ((aplausos))</p>

Studies of talk in interaction tend to treat interruption in conversation as an infringement on one's speaking rights (see Bilmes, 1997; Hutchby, 2008). While not every instance of interruption necessarily indexes symbolic domination or triggers conflict – for instance, interlocutors may be building the conversation with great involvement and effusiveness (Tannen, 1994) –, we need to take into account

the specificities of interaction, like its historical conditions, intertextual links, and power inequities, to appraise the effects of interruptions. Besides, it is fundamental to rely “on displayed participant orientation to interruption” to address what kinds of violations or mutual involvements are taking place (Bilmes, 1997, p. 507). Therefore, it is important to consider that this conversation was located in an institution made up of a majority of men, with a predominantly conservative profile. Furthermore, Marielle was the only Black woman among the city council members. Hence, Marielle's metapragmatic comments and orientation to overlaps in talk indicate her framing the interventions as interruptions, aimed at rescaling the interruptions onto the ground of struggle for economic redistribution and identity recognition (Fraser, 1995).

Sequentially, the three interruptions point to different ways in which Marielle reinscribed chronotopes (Bakhtin, 1982) – or images of space, time, and person – into political action. In the first interruption, Marielle is taken by surprise when a councilman approaches the tribune. Upon realizing that the councilman was bringing her a flower, she responds by simply making recourse to phatic and polite resources (“how are you councilman?,” “thank you”). However, at the second interruption, Marielle displays noticeable irritation. As we learned in our interviews with Marielle's friends, the ambience in the city council was markedly sexist and homophobic. Thus, the gesture of handing flowers to the few female council members was not without the summoning of a sexist history. Simultaneously, the males' gestures carried an ironic ambivalence, as Marielle had been involved in argumentative clashes with conservatives in the house. On realizing that Italo Ciba was approaching the pulpit with a flower, Marielle immediately reacts: “you're not interrupting me now, right?” She then wittily frames the interruption in the field of sexism – “but it's a man behaving as a man.” Next, to the Christian farewell he utters, she responds with the terms of her own Catholic formation (“Amen”). When Mr. Ciba departs, she rescales his gesture onto the field of gender struggle and economic redistribution: “the roses of resistance blossom in the asphalt (.) we receive roses but we will fight with tight fists too.” Spiritedly, Marielle projects small and ambivalent interruptions from the space–time of interaction to the broader field of societal inequities.

Next, while Marielle cites numbers of violence against women, a man interrupts her from the audience by shouting a cheer to Carlos Brilhante Ustra, a colonel who tortured and killed several dissidents during the military regime. After invoking the terms of decorum in the city council, Marielle frames the interruption as invoking a dictatorial past against which her struggle has been opposed. Citing the terms of democracy and of women's struggles, she exclaims, “I won't be interrupted.” As is the case with any performative utterance, “I won't be interrupted” exceeds the time and space of its pragmatic context (Butler, 1997), specifically exceeding the terms of conversational interruption. In Marielle's biography, her enunciations deliberately exceeded her own individual activity and present time, as was the case when she uttered “my trajectory and my individual condition cannot be only an individual condition [for long before] this mandate of a year and a few months, other black women had paved the way, and others will have to come,” in the debate in the Casa das Pretas, minutes before she was murdered. Indeed, Marielle's transtemporality would shape the movement of mourning and struggle that emerged from her death, as can be seen in the citation of “*não serei interrompida* (I won't be interrupted)” within the “Marielle Franco's Stairs,” in São Paulo (Figure 1), or in the slogan “*Marielle não será interrompida* (Marielle will not be interrupted)” being wielded by an activist in a protest (Figure 2), or on a banner of Marielle's party, the PSOL, on a webpage that honors three of her staff members who were elected deputies in 2018: Renata Souza, Monica Francisco, and Dani Monteiro (Figure 3).





**FIGURE 1** “I won’t be interrupted”, Marielle Franco Stairs, São Paulo. Photography by Luduvicu (@luduvicu). <https://twitter.com/luduvicu/status/1106171307824173059/photo/1>

#### 4 | “MARIELLE VIVE”

The election of Marielle's staff members to Rio's parliament in 2018, along with the election of other Black women to other houses of parliament, have been referred to as “germinação das sementes de Marielle” or the “germination of Marielle's seed.” In the protests for a fair investigation, phrases like “Marielle is a seed,” and “Marielle, present” point to a reconfiguration of temporality in the aftermath of her assassination. This is evident in the chant “Marielle is a seed,” which had rapidly expanded in massive protests in Brazilian cities and social media. Figure 4 is a rendition of the chant into a cartoon published by Quinho in the morning following her murder. It simultaneously indexes Marielle's multiplying action and precipitates the germination of her posthumous political influence. These chants are thus reflective of the ways in which Marielle's movement has given continuity to hope through language.

Marielle's friends and other progressives agree that Marielle iconized the racial and economic traits of a large portion of Brazil's population. Imani, Marielle's close friend and a member of her advisory board, told us: “Marielle carried on her body the marks of what ought to be said and how that should be said.” Imani added that Marielle also indexed the vulnerability of non-whites to armed violence:



**FIGURE 2** “Marielle won’t be interrupted”, poster wielded by an activist in a protest. Photography by Hellen Oliveira

(2)

isso que acontece com tantas pessoas nas favelas cariocas (.) não foi diferente com a Marielle que veio de uma favela carioca (.) ela:: só pôde ter talvez uma grande visibilidade de tudo de bom que ela fazia quando ela tombou (.) quando ela morreu, ela virou mais uma estatística nessa guerra que não é nossa (.) e que não é guerra, é genocídio, é:: quando ela tombou né? mas ela não tombou para acabar, tombou para virar semente

what happens to so many people in Rio’s favelas (.) was no different with Marielle, who also came from a favela in Rio (.) she:: was only able to have a great visibility for the amazing things she did when she tumbled down (.) when she died, she became an additional number in the statistics of a war that is not ours (.) and that it’s not war but genocide, yeah:: when she fell, right? but she didn’t fall to disappear, she fell to become a seed

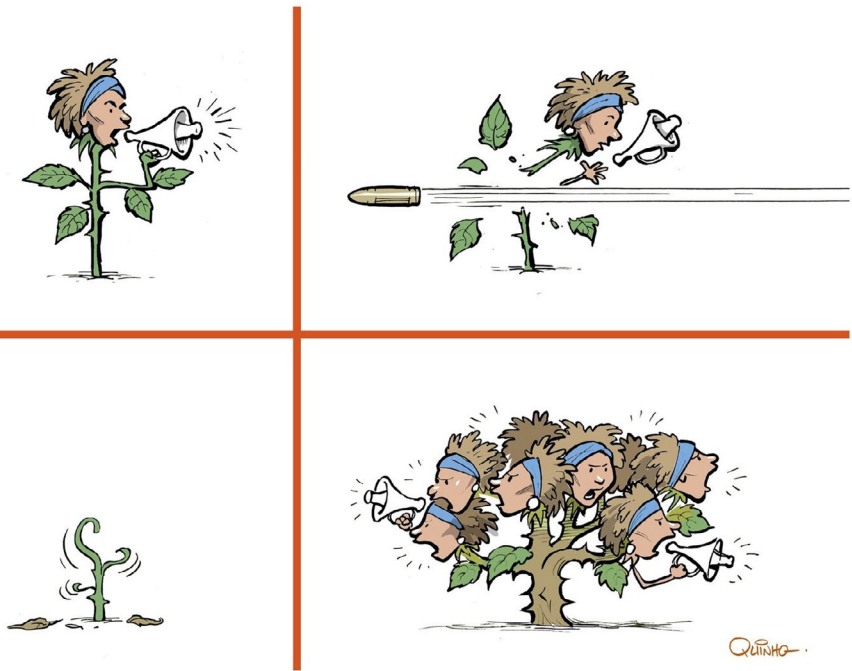
Note that Imani equates the tragic dimension of Marielle’s biography with the precariousness felt by the Black and peripheral populations in Brazil. She then couches this equation in a temporal domain: in her mourning narrative, Imani says that “[Marielle] didn’t fall to disappear, she fell to become a seed,”





**FIGURE 3** “I won’t be interrupted”, banner of Marielle’s party, the PSOL. <https://florescerpormarielle.psol50.org.br/nao-serei-interrompida/>

and that Marielle “was only able to have a great visibility for the amazing things she did when she tumbled down.” In other words, Marielle turned out to inhabit a time that is no longer the time of the living, but the epic time of heroes or martyrs. This extrapolation of Marielle’s biological time and its embedding in the living present is a key instantiation of metaleptic temporality. The “fantastic” effect (Genette, 1980) of talking about Marielle in the present time is often referenced by activists. Talíria Petrone, a friend of Marielle who became a federal deputy in 2018, produced an interesting metalinguistic rationalization about the notion that “Marielle lives” in her reflection on Marielle’s influence on the election in 2018 of Black women and other minorities to the federal parliament:



**FIGURE 4** Marielle - Quinho Cartum (@QuinhoCartum). <https://www.facebook.com/QuinhoCartum/posts/marielle/1402923016473974/>

(3)

a figura dela aqui em Brasília (. ) se mostra cada vez mais potente, mais forte mais necessário, embora tenham matado seu corpo (. ) quando a gente chega ali embaixo no plenário que é (...) expressão (. ) do que é o Brasil colonial, é o fazendeiro, é o representante da banca::da da bala, que tem o mesmo motivo que esse fazendeiro (. ) é o banqueiro e isso remete aos tempos da colonização né? (. ) e acho que a bancada ((do PSOL)) na sua diversidade regional, na sua diversidade:: de cor, na sua diversidade:: de gênero (...) reflete um (. ) enfrentamento (. ) ao que é esse parlamento majoritário (. ) e isso é Marielle (. ) em muita medida sim (. ) não porque Marielle vive:: porque pra mim não vive (. ) lembrar que Marielle não vive é muito importante pra entender a gravidade do momento (. ) Marielle foi assassinada e isso é a expressão de uma democracia jovem (. ) incompleta e que retrocede, sabe? que expressa uma mudança de regime (. ) mas as lutas que Marielle encampava tão aí expressas na diversidade da bancada do PSOL, no enfrentamento que a gente tem feito a esse governo que é a expressão do retrocesso democrático que tem saudade da ditadura que quer jogar no lixo a memória, a verdade e a justiça

her figure here in Brasília (. ) is increasingly powerful, stronger and more necessary, although they have killed her body (. ) when we get down there in the plenary which is (...) the expression (. ) of what colonial Brazil is, it's the farmer, the representative from the bullet cau::cus, who is related to this farmer (. ) it's the banker, and this all dates back to the times of colonization, right? (. ) and I think that the ((PSOL)) caucus in its regional diversity, in its diversity of color, in its diversity of gender (...) reflects a (. ) confrontation (. ) to this majority parliament (. ) and this is Marielle (. ) to a great extent yes (. ) not because Marielle li::ves because for me she does not live (. ) to remind ourselves that Marielle does not live is very important to understand the gravity of the moment (. ) Marielle was murdered, and this is the expression of a young democracy (. ) incomplete and backward, you know? that expresses a regime change (. ) but the struggles that Marielle had been leading are expressed there in the diversity of the PSOL caucus, in the confrontation that we have done to this government that is the expression of the democratic setback, that has *saudade* ((nostalgia)) for the dictatorship, that wants to throw away memory, truth and justice

Noteworthy is Talíria's use of the present tense to explain that the diversification of the PSOL caucus “é” (“is”) Marielle. Although she hastens to remind us that Marielle “does not live” biologically, Talíria invokes metaleptic temporality to emphasize that Marielle is nevertheless “increasingly powerful, stronger and more necessary” in Brasília. Talíria adds that the current racial, regional, and gendered diversity of the PSOL caucus stands in contradistinction to the backward time of the conservative caucuses, who are “the expression of the democratic setback,” who express *saudade*, or nostalgia, for the dictatorship, who reiterate the “times of colonization.” Other interviewees also invoked this clash between the present of transformation and the past of colonialism. Luanda, a middle-class human rights activist and a friend of Marielle, says that Marielle “pointed to change, to transformation.” In 2008, Luanda participated with Marielle in the writing of the bill “Funk é cultura” or “Funk music is culture,” which aimed at decriminalizing funk and recognizing it as a cultural expression. At the time Marielle was an advisor to Freixo, who proposed the bill, and was his important connection to the favelas; in Luanda's words, she was “novel:” Marielle took the “funkeiros” youth to the State Parliament's plenary, “a place that does not normally welcome them as audiences, much less as leaders.” Moreover, she noted, Marielle “points to another temporality because she is radically different from the oligarchy that has always constituted Brazilian politics. This oligarchy is white, macho-oriented, heteronormative, and Marielle defied all that.”

The mourners' metaleptic chanting of “Marielle, presente” has meant that, notwithstanding her premature death, Marielle's cause is still ongoing. As Talíria and Luanda put it, the present time means an openness to the disenfranchised from the Brazilian economic wealth — the ninth world's GDP and yet one of the most unequal economies. As Marielle herself wrote it in her master's dissertation, neo-liberal policies in Brazil aimed at the poor have increasingly moved away from a redistributive state and toward a “penal and police state” (Franco, 2014).

The metaleptic time of mourning points to the present and the future as simultaneously utopic and with concrete aspirations: Talíria mentions the accomplished diversity of the PSOL caucus; Luanda speaks of the youths from the favelas, who in 2008 were brought by Marielle to Rio's State Parliament to attend a voting session. In addition to seeking to redress colonial iterations of the past like the penal state (Wacquant, 2009), the metaleptic time of hope is also gregarious and semiotically propelling. Imani articulates this collective and metapragmatic dimension of the time of hope in spiritual terms:

(4)

Imani:	para mim é muito difícil falar sobre Marielle no passado porque eu sinto ela aqui (.) <u>o tempo todo</u> (.) eu sinto ela pre::sente apesar de inclusive <u>espiritualmente</u> eu acho que a gente tem que parar de falar “Marielle presente!” porque né? (.) [ela precisa ir, ela precisa descansar]	it's very hard for me to talk about Marielle in the past because I feel her here (.) <u>all the time</u> (.) I feel her pre::sent even if in fact <u>spiritually</u> I think we should stop saying “Marielle present,” because (.) [she must go, she needs to rest]
Daniel:	[claro, claro (.) precisa (.) Luanda falou]	[right, right (.) she must (.) Luanda said]
Imani:	mas é muito difícil para mim, porque ela tá <u>literalmente</u> muito em nós:: né? ela se fez corpo, ela se fez presença, se fez comunhão, ela tá contando o mundo	but it's very difficult for me because she is <u>literally</u> very much among us, right? she made herself body, she made herself presence, she made herself communion, she tells the world

The notion that Marielle “literally (...) made herself body, (...) made herself communion” is especially significant in light that both Marielle and Imani had their initial political formation in the base movements of the Catholic Church. As is the case with different modern secular formations

(Mahmood, 2005), the secularism of the activism of Imani, Marielle, and other militants in Rio is also predicated in religious terms. For Imani, in addition to this spiritually corporeal and gregarious dimension, the metaleptic temporality of the mourning over Marielle is also sociolinguistic: “she tells the world,” and thereby offers a lexicon to debate current problems. We now move to this layer of Marielle's metacommunicative action.

## 5 | PAPO RETO

Here, we unpack Marielle's and her mourning movement's grappling with a crucial aspect addressed by Heller and McElhinny (2017) in their narration of hope, namely, the practical reimagination of language commodification. Marielle and her mourners perform a considerable portion of their political action through *papo reto*, or straightforward talk. Typical of Rio's favelas, *papo reto* is a speech style that may be considered both a register and a metapragmatic framing. As a register (Agha, 2007, p. 80), i.e. a set of recognizable features of discourse that, “by virtue of such recognition, become effective ways of indexing roles and relationships among sign-users in performance,” *papo reto* is a composite of non-standard phonolexical and syntactic constructions in Portuguese that pragmatically index identities and social relations belonging in the favelas. Like other registers and cultural styles from the favelas, it also travels to other varieties of Portuguese, and Marielle was especially skilled in combining characterological features of standardized “bureaucratic talk” and those of *papo reto*. This combination lays bare the value of *papo reto* as a metapragmatic framing in discourse. The phrase “Vou te dar um papo reto,” or “I will give you a straightforward talk,” indicates that one will render the conversation in the simplest and most direct way (Facina, 2009). When it is used as a metapragmatic framing within an interaction, *papo reto* thus translates terms of state bureaucracy or other commodified registers into more tangible and everyday tropes.

*Papo reto* is in many ways analogous to forms of direct speech in other sociolinguistic contexts, such as *dugri* speech commonly used by Sabras (Jews born in Israel). Katriel (1986) describes *dugri* as an “antistyle” contrary to “the passive spirituality of Diaspora Jews as well as the elevated rhetoric of the early Zionist visionaries” (p. 25). As Katriel (1986) argues, “[t]he Sabras sought to dissociate themselves from both of these images: neither prayers nor word-spun visions were to be their fare, but rather actions, fact-creating deeds” (p. 25). *Dugri* speech is broader than *papo reto* as the former is also an attribute of a person (e.g. “he is *dugri*”, i.e. he is sincere); but with reference to the speech event, *dugri* talk and *papo reto* involve the same sense of assertiveness and sincerity, which challenge common expectations about face-work, i.e. they both involve norms of directness and sincerity that may threaten common concerns of politeness that “protect” the face of interactants (Katriel, 1986, p. 11). To a lesser degree, *papo reto* also has parallels with the speech style enacted by the political activists in the French Revolution. As Outram (1989, p. 156) argues, the revolutionaries' forms of embodied political action – discourse, clothing, and bodily postures – were designed for “authenticity, simplicity and transparency to the gaze of others,” and ostensibly counteracted the exclusionary embodied styles of the Ancién Regime, seen as indexing “artifice, display, and disguise.”

Marielle drew from these characteristics of assertiveness and contrast to convoluted speech that *papo reto*, respectively, shares with *dugri* talk and the French revolutionary speech styles. She was born in the favela and knew that upper-class registers may inhibit the poor from gaining access to material resources. She often framed bureaucratic talk as privileging groups from wealthier areas who have access to standardized Portuguese, university degrees, and other public resources. She wrote that the notion of “public” in hegemonic discourses about the favelas often has the “marks of (...) use of force and repression, especially by means of police action” (Franco, 2014, p. 14). For her, this view



“reinforces the predominant belief of favelas and peripheries as locations of absence and deprivation” (p. 14). Instead, Marielle portrayed favelas as “locations of production (...) and potency, where residents, notwithstanding the reality of low investments by the State, have invented their diverse forms of regulating and resisting life” (p. 14).

In her talk at Casa das Pretas, Marielle explained how *papo reto* may be deployed in unequal interactions to assertively demand access to language resources. She recalled a conflictive situation during her college education, when she and her colleague Luana were the only two Black Brazilians in the entire major of sociology at a private university. Marielle said that she engaged with *papo reto* to demand that her professor assign texts written in Portuguese for her class:

(5)

na época eu arrumei uma briga com um professor porque tinham bibliografias em inglês. Óbvio que a conjuntura era diferente, a vivência era diferente, a imposição e o que estava em disputa ali também (.) não tinha uma nuvem negra perguntando quantos professores e professoras negras havia (...) enfim, a carta, a movimento que a gente fez, ainda nesse momento com relação à língua que tavam tentando me impor, e hoje quando eu te ouço falar Aline, eu tenho uma bolsa na Cultura Inglesa (...) há dois anos e poucos eu estou pensando com o inglês e acho que a gente tem que ocupar e saber todos esses-- o *feminist movement* (.) é-- todos os termos e trabalhar e rascunhar no inglês mesmo pra ocupar esse espaço (.) não subverter a nossa cultura mas conseguir ocupar esse lugar

at the time I got into a fight with a teacher because he had assigned a bibliography in English. Obviously the situation was different, the experience was different, the imposition and what was in dispute there too (.) there was not a dark cloud asking how many black teachers were there (...) anyway, the letter, the movement that we made, at that moment regarding the language they were trying to impose on me, and today when I hear you speak Aline, I have a scholarship at Cultura Inglesa ((an English course)) (...) I've been struggling for two years to learn English, and I think we have to occupy and know all these-- the *feminist movement* ((in English)) (.) yeah-- all the terms and to work and draft them in English really to occupy this space (.) I'm not saying we should subvert our culture but to manage to occupy this place

Making recourse to *papo reto* in this context meant rescaling the default language of Brazilian academia from English into Portuguese (2020), so that underprivileged students like herself could access the debate. But note that the movement was not static, as Marielle adds that a decade later, she finally had access to education in English. However, in this second political moment, the very access to this commodified idiom became part of *papo reto*. As Marielle puts it, this linguistic resource may allow transnational alliances, which does not simply mean distinction but primarily collaborations that yield the occupation of other spaces.

Imani emphasizes the pragmatic value of *papo reto* as a form of translation. As she told us, the advisors were often irritated by the fact that Marielle would not cite in debates all the items from economic surveys her team produced: “She would go to a debate on economics, we would work hard to write a three-page survey, and Marielle would use only one paragraph. We were outraged.” Imani adds, “And the amazing thing was that she spoke only a paragraph and was cheered.” Imani's rationalization about Marielle's conversational performance is that she “connected with people; people saw themselves in Marielle, they felt they were participating.” In other words, Marielle's *papo reto* did not only mean translating into non-standard norms the terms of debates commonly enunciated in the Standard; or did it simply mean the collaborative access to other linguistic resources such as English or the linguistic bureaucracy; it meant that all this could be performed by a Black, lesbian woman from the favela, who in performing these translations and collaborations exceeded her speech at a time when individuals like her do not normally occupy decision-making spaces. For Imani, “Marielle carried on her body the marks of what ought to be said and how that should be said.”

MC Carol, a singer and songwriter of funk music, offered us rationalizations about the pragmatics of Marielle's (and Talíria's) *papo reto*. In an interview, she describes the impression she had of Marielle and Talíria in a 2018 meeting, when they tried to encourage her to enter politics. A resident of the favela Preventório, MC Carol had already been poetically embedding *papo reto* in her lyrics, translating matters such as the critique of Portuguese colonialism or male domination into registers accessible to favela youths. She told us that Marielle and Talíria defined their *papo reto* along these lines: "Girl, you have to go, you have to try kicking the door open." Here, "kicking the door open" means being assertive, straightforward, and determined, thus, forcing one's way into the field of political domination. In relation to the style of *papo reto*, MC Carol recalls that Marielle said "I arrive in the meeting with my headband and high heels," meaning that "[Black women] have to enter, we have to occupy." It could therefore be said that Marielle's recourse to *papo reto* had a fundamentally aesthetic dimension (see Outram, 1989).

The work of mourning has led these activists, many of whom now occupy parliamentary spaces, to realize that the assertive, straightforward, and translational values of *papo reto*, which Marielle embodied in her speech performance, are now being materialized in a sprawling political action. Talíria, for example, says that "the majority of Brazilian women have Marielle's face" and adds that most mothers of people who are victimized by violence in Brazil "are women like Marielle." Hence, the key to transforming this suffering is "the occupation of spaces of power," along the lines of the hope taught by Marielle, "in collective and subversive ways." In spite of her grief, Talíria states that the "result [of her friend's assassination] was the opposite of those who wanted to silence Marielle;" the murder "stoked a sense of urgency that led to the biggest uprising of Black women in occupying all spaces in Brazil." Thus, not only metaleptically but also practically, Marielle is *presente*.

## 6 | CONCLUSION: TOWARD A SOCIOLINGUISTICS OF HOPE

In this study, we demonstrated how Marielle and her mourners enregistered hope in their communicative practice. We chose to look at the empirical site of struggle for redress of historical inequalities in Rio de Janeiro and gauge the centrality of hope in this struggle as "a category of both experience and analysis" (Crapanzano, 2003, p. 4). Here, we gesture toward defining a sociolinguistics of hope in this scenario, as predicated in a systematics of temporal, metapragmatic, and pedagogic operations. First, as a councilmember, a mother, and a queer Black woman, Marielle continuously rescaled time toward human rights and social justice: for instance, she reoriented the micro-aspects of interactions to broader understandings of Brazil's colonial past and alternative emancipatory futures. In over a decade in politics, she had already become a figure of authority in progressive circles in Rio. When she died, mourners grappled with temporality in simultaneously practical and utopic ways, rapidly enacting a metaleptic temporality through chants such as "Marielle, presente" and "Marielle vive." While their transgression between narrative worlds through reinscribing Marielle's expansive and affirmative time into the present produced a residual effect of uncanniness, this metalepsis also points to the fact that the temporality of hope is neither linear nor pre-given. The time of Marielle's hope is not a teleological future but the present of social justice and affirmative politics.

Second, metapragmatically, in her lifetime Marielle cultivated *papo reto*, a sociolinguistic resource that is widely utilized by residents of peripheries in circumventing the convoluted talk of bureaucracy, law, and other commodified domains. Marielle translated the terms of economic and bureaucratic debates into a register accessible to those from the favelas, and into the tropes of feminism, racial equality, and economic redistribution. Moreover, as many of our interlocutors told us, Marielle embodied

the sense of assertiveness and determination rationalized as *papo reto*, thus, proving that a woman iconizing the base of Brazil's economic pyramid could be part of institutional debates.

Third, the sociolinguistics of hope in Marielle's communicative practice had an important pedagogic dimension. She knew that hope can be learned and therefore led others in cultivating the adequate virtues, affects, and ideologies for surviving Brazilian historical inequities and formations of violence. In this pedagogy of cultivating one's sensibilities for hope, Marielle fractalized the translational and performative layers of *papo reto* into a sprawling political movement. Metaleptically, she is still *presente* in teaching others how to flourish. Some of the effects of this sociolinguistics of hope are evident in the fact that several Black women were elected to different houses of Brazil's parliament in 2018. Moreover, under the authority of her widow, Monica Benicio, her sister, Anielle Franco, and her daughter, Luyara Sousa, and Marielle's family have led a tireless and reticulated struggle for justice: to find out who commissioned her murder and the motives for silencing an elected official. Besides, several other initiatives have germinated in Brazil and beyond, like the Instituto Marielle Franco, an NGO whose mission, in addition to seeking justice, is "to multiply the legacy and water Marielle's seeds."

Through family resemblance, the sociolinguistics of hope in Rio de Janeiro resonates with other situated formations of hope. Like the Crow, an indigenous peoples in the U.S.A. whose culture was devastated by the federal government's confining them to a reservation (Lear, 2006), Marielle's mourners have devised collective and cooperative forms of sociality and social action that enabled their flourishing as a group. Like the social movements narrated by Heller and McEllhiny (2017), Marielle and her movement have reclaimed sociolinguistic inequalities and imagined more equitable forms of using language. Like the *To the Left of the Square* militants studied by Borba (2019), who opposed the accumulation of hate during Dilma Rousseff's impeachment, Marielle's mourners have produced novel ways of engaging with temporality. Meanwhile, we believe that further studies on hope in sociolinguistics may gesture to other inventive forms of surviving current conditions of precarization, violence, and inequality.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no affiliations or involvement with institutions that may have financial or non-financial interests with the subject matter discussed in the article.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The public data that support the findings of this study – Marielle's speech on March 8, 2018 and Taliria Petrone's testimony – are, respectively, available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5sjJvK\\_Txs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5sjJvK_Txs) and <https://florescerpormarielle.psol50.org.br/nao-serei-interrompida/>. The interviews with Marielle's colleagues are not publicly available as this material contains information that could compromise the privacy and safety of research participants.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For reasons of research ethics, we anonymized the names of all the participants who are not public figures.

<sup>2</sup> Utilized Jefferson Transcription Conventions:

(.)	A micropause
(0.7)	A timed pause, long enough to indicate a time
[ ]	Overlapping talk
(( ))	Analyst comments
<u>Underlining</u>	A raise in volume or emphasis
→	A sentence of particular interest for the analysis
CAPITALS	Louder or shouted words
=	Indicates that there was no pause between sentences
::	Stretched sound

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